

STARTER ASSEMBLY FOR A GAS DISCHARGE LAMP

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention is a continuation of U.S. Application Serial No. 10/368,702, which was filed on February 18, 2003, now U.S. Patent No. 6,806,649 which claims benefit under 35 USC §119(e) of U.S. provisional patent application Serial No. 60/357,908, entitled "Point Of Use Water Treatment System" filed on February 19, 2002.

[0002] This application hereby incorporates by reference U.S. patent application Serial. No.: 10/133,860, entitled "Inductively Powered Lamp Assembly," filed on April 26, 2002, now U.S. Patent No. 6,731,071; U.S. patent application Serial No. 09/592,194 entitled "Fluid Treatment System", filed on June 12, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,436,299; U.S. patent application Serial No. 10/246,155 entitled "Inductively Coupled Ballast Circuit", filed on September 18, 2002; and issued U.S. Patent No. 6,436,299, entitled "Water Treatment System with an Inductively Coupled Ballast".

[0003] The present invention relates to starters for gas discharge lamps, and in particular to a starter assembly having a magnetic switch for starting a lamp. Traditionally, gas discharge lamps used a special starter switch mechanism to start the lamp. When the lamp is first turned on, electricity flows through a bypass circuit and across a starter switch and through the lamp electrodes. This electricity preheats the electrodes, ionizing the gas in the lamp, thereby creating an electrically conductive medium. After the electrodes are heated sufficiently, the starter switch opens, causing the lamp ballast to provide a voltage surge, and the electric current to arc through the gas discharge lamp. The conventional starter switch uses a small discharge bulb containing neon or some other gas. The bulb has two electrodes positioned adjacent to each other. Current arcs between the electrodes, causing a small amount of heat to build within the bulb, which